

Tim Walz

Timothy James Walz (/woʊlz/; born April 6, 1964) is an American politician serving as the 41st and current governor of Minnesota since 2019. He is a member of the Democratic–Farmer–Labor Party (DFL).

Walz was the U.S. Representative for Minnesota's 1st congressional district from 2007 to 2019.^[2] The district comprises the state's southern end, running along the entire border with Iowa; it includes Rochester, Austin, Winona and Mankato. He was first elected in 2006, defeating six-term Republican incumbent Gil Gutknecht. He was reelected five times and served on the Agriculture Committee, Armed Services Committee and Veterans' Affairs Committee. Walz also served on the Congressional-Executive Commission on China.

In March 2017 Walz announced that he would not run for reelection to Congress and instead run for Governor of Minnesota. On November 6, 2018, Walz was elected to the governorship, defeating the Republican nominee, Hennepin County Commissioner Jeff Johnson.^[3]

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Tim Walz



41st Governor of Minnesota

Incumbent

Assumed office

January 7, 2019

Lieutenant **Peggy Flanagan**

Preceded by **Mark Dayton**

**Member of the
U.S. House of Representatives
from Minnesota's 1st district**

In office

January 3, 2007 – January 3, 2019

Preceded by **Gil Gutknecht**

Succeeded by **Jim Hagedorn**

Personal details

Born Timothy James Walz
April 6, 1964
West Point, Nebraska,
U.S.

Political party Minnesota Democratic–Farmer–Labor

Spouse(s) Gwen Whipple (m. 1994)

Children 2

Residence Governor's Residence

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Early life, education and military career

Walz was born in West Point, Nebraska, the son of Darlene R. and James F. "Jim" Walz. The son of a public school administrator and community activist, Walz was raised in Chadron, Nebraska, a rural community in the northwestern portion of the state.

Walz graduated from Butte High School in a class of 25 students, and went on to earn a bachelor of science degree in social science education from Chadron State College. Walz's first teaching experience was at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. He then accepted a teaching position with WorldTeach in the People's Republic of China.^[4]

Walz enlisted in the Army National Guard in 1981, and served over a 24-year career. In 1989, he earned the title of Nebraska Citizen-Soldier of the Year. After a deployment to Italy with his Guard unit, Walz was conditionally promoted to command sergeant major. Walz chose to retire before his most recent six-year enlistment was complete when his unit received orders to deploy to Iraq.^{[5][6]} Since Walz did not complete his promotion conditions, his rank was changed back to master sergeant after he left the service.^[6] He resumed teaching as a geography teacher and football coach at Mankato West High School.^[4]


Walz and his wife, Gwen, ran Educational Travel Adventures, accompanying high school juniors and seniors on summer educational trips to China.

U.S. House of Representatives

Political campaigns

Walz decided to run for Congress in 2006.^[7] He had no opponent for the DFL nomination in the September 12, 2006 primary election. He beat incumbent Republican Gil Gutknecht in the general election on November 7, and took office on January 3, 2007. After the election, Gutknecht was described as having been caught "off guard" and Walz as having "resolved never to get caught like that himself. ... He packaged himself as a moderate from Day One, built an office centered on constituent service and carved out a niche as a tireless advocate for veterans."^[8]

Walz was reelected in 2008 with 62% of the vote, becoming only the second non-Republican to win a second full term in the district. He won a third term in 2010, defeating State Representative Randy Demmer with 50% of the vote. He was reelected in 2012, 2014, and 2016.^[9]

Education	<div>Chadron State College</div> <div>(BS)</div> <div>Minnesota State University, Mankato</div> <div>(MS)</div>
Website	<div>Governor website (http://mn.gov/governor/)</div>
Military service	
Allegiance	<div> United States</div>
Branch/service	<div>United States Army</div> <div>National Guard^[1]</div>
Years of service	<div>1981–2005^[1]</div>
Highest rank attained	<div>Sergeant Major</div>
Awards	<div>Army Commendation Medal</div> <div>Army Achievement Medal</div>

During his 2018 campaign for governor, two senior NCOs of the Minnesota National Guard falsely accused Walz of fabricating facts about his service and lying about his military rank.^[10] The allegation about his military rank was debunked.^[11]

Tenure

Upon his swearing in, Walz became the highest-ranking retired enlisted soldier ever to serve in Congress,^[12] as well as only the fourth Democrat/DFLer to represent his district. The others were Thomas Wilson (1887–89), William Harries (1891–93), and Tim Penny (1983–95).

Walz served on the House Agriculture Committee,^[13] Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and the Armed Services Committee. Along with fellow Minnesota Democrat Keith Ellison, Walz opposed President Bush's plan to increase troop levels in Iraq.^[14] In his first week as a legislator, Walz cosponsored a bill to raise the minimum wage, voted for stem cell research, voted to allow Medicare to negotiate pharmaceutical prices, and voiced support for pay-as-you-go budget rules, requiring that new spending or tax changes not add to the federal deficit.^[15]

Representing a district that has traditionally voted Republican, Walz cast votes ranging from moderate to liberal.^[16] He voted against the act to Prohibit Federally Funded Abortion Services,^[17] and voted to advance the Affordable Care Act out of the House.^[18] He has also voted to continue funding for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan,^[19] and against the 2008 TARP bill, which purchased troubled assets from financial institutions.^[20]

Walz received a 100% rating from Planned Parenthood in 2012, from the ACLU in 2011, from the American Immigration Lawyers Association in 2009–10, from the AFL-CIO in 2010, from the Teamsters in 2009–10, and from NOW in 2007. He also received single-digit ratings from the National Taxpayers' Union, Citizens against Government Waste, Americans for Tax Reform, and Freedom Works. The US Chamber of Commerce gave him a 25% rating in 2010.^[21] Walz was ranked the 7th most bipartisan member of the House during the 114th Congress (and the most bipartisan member from Minnesota) in the Bipartisan Index created by The Lugar Center and the McCourt School of Public Policy that ranks members of Congress by measuring how often their bills attract co-sponsors from the opposite party and how often they co-sponsor bills by members of the opposite party.^[22]

Veterans' issues

Having served 24 years in the Army National Guard, as a freshman in Congress he was given a rare third committee membership when he was assigned to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.^[23] Walz has championed enhanced veterans benefits since taking office in 2007. In May of that year the House unanimously passed his "Traumatic Brain Injuries Center Act" to set up five centers around the nation to study traumatic brain injuries and develop improved models for caring for veterans suffering from such injuries.^[24]

Walz also supported the GI Bill of 2008, which expanded education benefits for veterans and in some cases allowed them to transfer education benefits to family members.^[25] In 2009, Walz gave the keynote address at the American Legion National Convention in Louisville, KY. He spoke about the need for the



Walz freshman portrait
(110th Congress)

VA and Department of Defense to work together to make sure that returning service men and women "do not fall through the cracks when they transition to civilian life".^[26]

Walz was the lead House sponsor of the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act, which directs the Veterans Administration to report on veteran mental health care and suicide prevention programs. It also gives the VA permission to provide incentives to psychiatrists who agree to join the VA medical system.^[27]

2008 financial crisis

During 2008, Walz repeatedly spoke out against using taxpayer money to bail out financial institutions; in late September he voted against the \$700 billion TARP bill, which purchased troubled assets from these institutions.^[28] Walz released a statement after the bill's passage, saying, "The bill we voted on today passes the buck when it comes to recouping the losses taxpayers might suffer. I also regret that this bill does not do enough to help average homeowners, or provide sufficient oversight of Wall Street."^[29] For the same reasons, in December 2008 he voted against the bill that offered \$14 billion in government loans to bail out the country's large automobile manufacturers.^[30] In June 2009 Walz introduced a bipartisan resolution calling on the federal government to "relinquish its temporary ownership interests in the General Motors Corporation and Chrysler Group, LLC, as soon as possible" and stated that the government must not be involved in those companies' management decisions.^[31]

Economic issues

Despite his votes against bailout bills that loaned taxpayer money to large banks and auto manufacturers, Walz did vote with his Democratic colleagues to support the 2009 American Recovery & Reinvestment Act. As a member of the House Transportation Committee, Walz saw the stimulus bill as an opportunity to work "with his congressional colleagues to make job creation through investment in public infrastructure like roads, bridges and clean energy the cornerstone of the economic recovery plan".^[32] Walz has focused heavily on job and economic issues important to his southern Minnesota district, which has a mix of larger employers like the Mayo Clinic along with small businesses and agricultural interests. In July 2009 he voted for the Enhancing Small Business Research and Innovation Act, which he described as "part of our long-term economic blueprint to spur job creation by encouraging America's entrepreneurs to innovate toward breakthrough technological advancements".^{[33][34]} Walz also urged assistance for hog and dairy farmers who struggled with lower prices for their commodities in 2008 and 2009.^[35]

Education

Walz was a public school teacher for 20 years. He opposes using merit pay for teachers.^[36] Voting in favor of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Walz pointed to its strong provisions in support of public school buildings.^{[37][38]} Walz is on record supporting legislation to lower tuition costs.^[39] In a February 12, 2009 speech, he said that the most important thing to do "to ensure a solid base for [America's] economic future ... is to provide the best education possible for [American] children."^[40] He has received strong backing for these policies from many interest groups, including the National Education Association, the American Association of University Women and the National Association of Elementary School Principals.^[41]

Women's issues

Walz supports abortion rights^[36] and has a 100% rating from Planned Parenthood.^[21] The National Right to Life Committee gave him a rating of zero.^[21] In early 2009, Walz voted for the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.^[42]

LGBT issues

Walz strongly supports LGBT rights, including federal anti-discrimination laws on the basis of sexual orientation.^[36] In a 2009 speech he called for an end to the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy. Walz voted in favor of the Matthew Shephard Hate Crimes Act and the Sexual Orientation Employment Nondiscrimination Act. In 2007, he received a 90% grade from the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest LGBT organization.^[21] In 2011, Walz announced his support for the Respect for Marriage Act.^[43]

Cannabis

Walz is a longtime supporter of legalizing both medical and recreational cannabis use.^[44]

Committee assignments

- Committee on Agriculture
 - Subcommittee on Conservation, Energy, and Forestry
 - Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management
- Committee on Veterans' Affairs (Ranking Member)
 - Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs
 - Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity

Caucus memberships

- Chair, Congressional EMS Caucus^[45]
- Co-Chair, National Guard and Reserve Component Caucus^[46]
- Co-Chair, Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus^[47]
- Co-Chair, Congressional Veterans Jobs Caucus^[48]
- Member, LGBT Equality Caucus^[49]
- Congressional Arts Caucus^[50]

Governor of Minnesota

Walz was sworn in as governor of Minnesota on January 7, 2019, at the Fitzgerald Theater in Saint Paul. Walz took the oath of office alongside incoming Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan, Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon, Minnesota State Auditor Julie Blaha, and Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, all Democrats.^[51] Walz spoke about education and healthcare reform in his inauguration speech.^[52]

Police reform

On May 26, 2020, the day after the killing of George Floyd, Walz and lieutenant governor Peggy Flanagan demanded justice and called the video of Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin kneeling on George Floyd's neck "disturbing".^[53] Walz elaborated, "The lack of humanity in this disturbing video is sickening. We will get answers and seek justice".^[53]

Walz responded to Floyd's death by ordering the Minnesota state legislature to reconvene for a special sessions on legislation for police reform and accountability.^[54] After police reform failed to pass the first special session in June,^[55] a second special session was held in July.^[56]

On July 21, the Minnesota state legislature passed major police reform legislation.^[57] The new compromise law includes a limited ban on police from using chokehold restraint so long as the officers were not at greater risk.^[57] It bans the old warrior training program, which was regarded as dehumanizing people and encouraging aggressive conduct.^[57] It requires training peace officers to deal with people with autism or in a mental health crisis and deescalation training for situations that could turn volatile.^[57] And it creates a special independent unit at the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension for investigations of fatal police encounters and a community relations advisory council to consult with the Police Officers Standards and Training Board on policy changes.^[57] Walz signed the legislation into law on July 23.^[58]



Tim Walz is sworn in as Minnesota's 41st governor at the Fitzgerald Theater in St Paul, Minnesota

Personal life

Walz and his wife, Gwen, married in 1994. They lived in Mankato, Minnesota for nearly 20 years before moving to Saint Paul with their two children upon his election as governor.^[59]

Walz's brother, Craig, was killed by a falling tree during a storm in 2016. He was survived by his wife Julie, and their son, Jacob, who suffered severe injuries but survived.^[60]

Election campaigns

2006 United States House of Representatives elections in Minnesota, District 1				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±
Democratic (DFL)	Tim Walz	141,622	53	-
Republican	Gil Gutknecht (Incumbent)	126,487	47	-13

2008 United States House of Representatives elections in Minnesota, District 1				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±
Democratic (DFL)	Tim Walz (Incumbent)	207,748	62.5	+9.5
Republican	Brian J. Davis	109,446	32.9	-
Independence	Gregory Mikkelsen	14,903	4.5	-

2010 United States House of Representatives elections in Minnesota, District 1				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±
Democratic (DFL)	Tim Walz (Incumbent)	122,390	49.4	-13.1
Republican	Randy Demmer	109,261	44.1	+11.2
Independence	Steven Wilson	13,243	5.3	+0.8

2012 United States House of Representatives elections in Minnesota, District 1				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±
Democratic (DFL)	Tim Walz (Incumbent)	193,211	57.5	+8.1
Republican	Allen Quist	142,164	42.3	-1.8

2014 United States House of Representatives elections in Minnesota, District 1				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±
Democratic (DFL)	Tim Walz (Incumbent)	122,851	54.2	-3.3
Republican	Jim Hagedorn	103,536	45.7	+3.4

2016 United States House of Representatives elections in Minnesota, District 1				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±
Democratic (DFL)	Tim Walz (Incumbent)	169,076	50.4	-3.8
Republican	Jim Hagedorn	166,527	49.6	+3.9

2018 Minnesota Democratic–Farmer–Labor Party gubernatorial primary				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	
Democratic (DFL)	Tim Walz	242,832	41.60%	
Democratic (DFL)	Erin Murphy	186,969	32.03%	
Democratic (DFL)	Lori Swanson	143,517	24.59%	
Democratic (DFL)	Tim Holden	6,398	1.10%	
Democratic (DFL)	Olé Savior	4,019	0.69%	
Total votes		583,735	100%	

2018 Minnesota gubernatorial election ^[6]				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±
Democratic (DFL)	Tim Walz/Peggy Flanagan	1,393,096	53.84%	+3.77%
Republican	Jeff Johnson/Donna Bergstrom	1,097,705	42.43%	-2.08%
Grassroots	Chris Wright/Judith Schwartzbacker	68,667	2.65%	+1.07%
Libertarian	Josh Welter/Mary O'Connor	26,735	1.03%	+0.11%
n/a	Write-ins	1,084	0.04%	0.00%
Total votes		'2,587,287'	'100.0%'	N/A
Democratic (DFL) hold				

See also

- US Congressional Delegations from Minnesota
- List of United States Representatives from Minnesota

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External links

- Governor Tim Walz (<https://mn.gov/governor/>) official government website
- Campaign website (<https://walzflanagan.org/>)

- **Tim Walz** (https://curlie.org/Regional/North_America/United_States/Minnesota/Government/Federal/US_House_of_Representatives/Tim_Walz_%5BD-1%5D) at **Curlie**
- **Biography** (<http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=w000799>) at the *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*
- **Profile** (<https://www.votesmart.org/candidate/65443>) at **Vote Smart**
- **Financial information (federal office)** (<https://www.fec.gov/data/candidate/H6MN01174>) at the **Federal Election Commission**
- **Legislation sponsored** (<https://www.congress.gov/member/timothy-walz/1856>) at the **Library of Congress**
- **Appearances** (<https://www.c-span.org/person/?timothywalz>) on **C-SPAN**

U.S. House of Representatives

Preceded by
Gil Gutknecht

Member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Minnesota's 1st congressional district
2007–2019

Succeeded by
Jim Hagedorn

Party political offices

Preceded by
Mark Dayton

Democratic nominee for Governor of Minnesota
2018

Most recent

Political offices

Preceded by
Mark Dayton

Governor of Minnesota
2019–present

Incumbent

U.S. order of precedence (ceremonial)

Preceded by
Mike Pence
as Vice President

Order of Precedence of the United States
Within Minnesota

Succeeded by
Mayor of city
in which event is held

Succeeded by
Otherwise Nancy Pelosi
as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives

Preceded by
Gavin Newsom
as Governor of California

Order of Precedence of the United States
Outside Minnesota

Succeeded by
Kate Brown
as Governor of Oregon

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